

REMARKS


This Response is filed in response to the Office Action mailed October 2, 2002. Claims 1, 4, 10, 30, 31, 33, 45, 47, 49, 53, 54, 56 and 58 have been amended to more clearly define the present invention. New Claim 59 has been added. The specification has also been amended. No new matter has been added in these amendments.

A Request for Approval of Proposed Drawing Corrections is submitted herewith. A Petition For a One Month Extension of Time to respond to the Office Action is submitted herewith. A check in the amount of \$212.00 is submitted herewith to cover the cost of the additional claim and the one month extension. Please charge Deposit Account No. 02-1818 for any insufficiency or credit.

Claim 14 was objected to because of the typographical error of "aid award symbols". Claim 14 has been amended to "said award symbols" to overcome this error and Applicant respectfully requests that the objection be withdrawn.

Claims 1 to 29, 31, 49 to 53 and 58 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. Specifically, Claims 1 to 29, 31 and 58 were rejected for an insufficient antecedent basis for the recited "the number" element. Applicant has amended this element in Claims 1, 31 and 58 to recite "the plurality" to overcome this rejection. Additionally, Claims 10 to 15 were rejected for an insufficient antecedent basis for the recited "said probabilities" element. Applicant has amended this element in Claim 10 to recite "each probability" to overcome this rejection. Moreover, Claims 49 to 53 were rejected for an insufficient antecedent basis for the recited "said selection sets" element. Claim 49 has been amended to recite "selection set" and it is respectfully submitted that amended Claim 49 and it's dependent Claims 50 to 53 have overcome this rejection.

Claims 1, 2, 8, 9, 17, 21, 22, 24, 25, 28 to 31, 35 to 37, 40 to 42, 45 to 47 and 58 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Gura. Applicant disagrees with and traverses these rejections. Nevertheless, to place this application in condition for allowance, Applicant has amended the claims to further patentably distinguish over Gura.



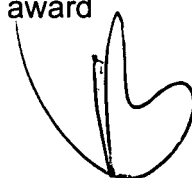
Gura relates to a gaming machine in which the probability of winning certain bonus payouts varies in response to the different start-bonus outcomes that activate the bonus game. More specifically, Gura relates to a gaming device with a basic game in the form of a slot machine with a plurality of reels. Each reel includes a plurality of symbols (col. 3, lines 21-35). In the basic game, the reels spin to indicate a plurality of basic game outcomes (col. 4, lines 17-19). Included among the basic game outcomes are winning basic game outcomes which occur when the symbols appearing on the reels along an active payline correspond to a winning combination. If the displayed symbols stop in a winning combination, the game provides the player an award. Furthermore, included among the plurality of basic game outcomes are a plurality of different start-bonus outcomes for starting play of a bonus game (col. 4, lines 48-56). The bonus game provides a number of selectable elements including one designated element. In the bonus game, the object is to select the designated element while selecting as few selectable elements as possible. The fewer the number of elements the player selects before selecting the designated element, the greater the bonus award provided to the player (col. 5, lines 8-25). In Gura, the number of selectable elements provided during the bonus game is dependent on one of the different start-bonus outcomes in the primary game that cause the initiation of the bonus game (col. 4, line 57 to col. 5, line 7). Accordingly, the better the start-bonus outcome (i.e., the less selectable elements for the player to select from), the better the probability that the player will select the designated element in as few selections as possible and the better bonus payout awarded to the player. Thus, in Gura, the probability of obtaining certain bonus payouts in the bonus game varies based directly on the different start-bonus outcomes in the primary game that activate the bonus game.

In Gura, upon the completion of the bonus game, the processor of the gaming machine occasionally triggers one or more additional bonus features. One additional bonus feature requires the player to continue selecting from the provided number of selectable elements to find an additional designated element (col. 6, lines 47-53). Another additional bonus feature provides an additional number of selectable elements including a designated element. As in the primary bonus game, the fewer the number

of selections it takes the player to find the designated element, the greater the payout (col. 6, line 66 to col. 7, line 3).

In one embodiment, the present invention provides a gaming device that enables a player to accumulate awards by activating an award distributor having a plurality of award symbols and at least one selection group activator symbol. The gaming device of the present invention provides the player with a plurality of activations of the award distributor. An award symbol or a selection group activator symbol is indicated for each activation of the award distributor. When an award symbol is indicated, the gaming device provides the player an award associated with the indicated award symbol. When a selection group activator symbol is indicated, the gaming device displays a plurality of masked selections. A selection award is associated with each masked selection. The gaming device enables the player to select one selection from the plurality of masked selections. The gaming device reveals the award associated with the player selected selection and provides the revealed award to the player. The revealed selection may not be reselected by the player in a subsequent selection. Thus, the number of available selections in the plurality of masked selections decreases by one after the player picks each selection. The game then returns to the award distributor. If the award distributor subsequently indicates a selection group activator symbol, the gaming device enables the player to select a selection from the remaining plurality of masked selections. This process continues until the player has no remaining activations of the award distributor.

Claims 1, 30, 45, 47, 49, 54 and 56 have been amended in part to clarify that the processor provides the player an award associated with each indicated award symbol and in part to clarify the remaining selections feature. More specifically, amended independent Claim 1 is directed to a gaming device including an award distributor, at least one selection set having a plurality of selections, a plurality of selection awards associated with the selections in the selection set, a selector and a processor. The award distributor has a plurality of award symbols, at least one selection group activator symbol, and a symbol indicator. The selector enables a player to pick the selections in the selection set. The processor causes the symbol indicator to indicate symbols of the award distributor, provides the player an award associated with each indicated award



symbol, co-acts with the selector to enable the player to pick at least one of the selections from the plurality of selections when the selection group activator symbol is indicated, provides the selection award associated with each picked selection to the player and reduces the plurality of available selections in the selection set which may be subsequently picked by the player when the selection group activator symbol is subsequently indicated by the symbol indicator of the award distributor.

Gura does not provide the player an award associated with each indicated award symbol, and thus fails to disclose every element of amended Claim 1. The Office Action has interpreted the reels of the gaming machine described in Gura to be the award distributor, the payline on the reels to be the symbol indicator and the start-bonus outcome that starts the bonus game as the selection group activator symbol. In Gura, the symbols on the reels must stop along an active payline in a winning basic game outcome or a start-bonus outcome in order for the gaming device to provide the player an award either in the basic game or in the bonus game. If the symbols on the reels do not stop along an active payline in a winning basic game outcome or a start-bonus outcome, the gaming device does not provide the player an award. Therefore, the reels in Gura do not provide the player an award for each reel symbol outcome. On the other hand, the gaming device of amended Claim 1 provides the player an award associated with each indicated award symbol on the award distributor. Additionally, when the award distributor indicates a selection group activator symbol, the gaming device enables the player to pick a selection and provides the player the award associated with the player picked selection. Thus, the gaming device of amended Claim 1 provides the player an award associated with each indicated symbol on the award distributor. Accordingly, as the gaming device of amended Claim 1 provides an award for each indicated symbol on an award distributor and the reels of Gura do not provide an award for each reel symbol outcome, it is respectfully submitted that amended independent Claim 1 is patentably distinguished over Gura and in condition for allowance.

Furthermore, in Gura, the player is provided a bonus award based on the number of selectable elements selected prior to selecting the designated selection element. The fewer prior selected elements, the greater the provided bonus award. Unless the player selects the designated selection element with their first selection, the gaming

device of Gura will not provide the player a bonus award for their first selection. Thus, the player may select a number of selectable elements before a bonus award, if any, is provided to the player. On the other hand, in the gaming device of amended Claim 1, each selection in the selection set is associated with a selection award and the player is provided a selection award for each picked selection. Accordingly, unlike Gura, the gaming device of amended Claim 1 provides a selection award for each picked selection. For this additional reason, it is respectfully submitted that amended independent Claim 1 is patentably distinguished over Gura and in condition for allowance.

Additionally, in the gaming device of amended Claim 1, each subsequent time the symbol indicator of the award distributor indicates the selection group activator symbol, the selection set includes the remaining selections in the selection set and does not include any previous selected selection of the selection set which were previously picked by the player. In Gura, the selections available for the player to pick in a subsequent iteration are not dependent in any way on any selections previously picked by the player in a previous iteration. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that for this additional reason, amended Claim 1 is patentably distinguished over Gura and is in condition for allowance.

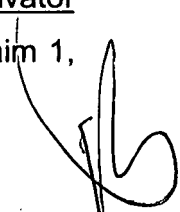
Claims 2, 8, 9, 17, 24, 25, 28 and 29 depend directly or indirectly from amended Claim 1 and are also allowable for the reasons given with respect to amended Claim 1, and because of the additional features recited in these claims. Certain of these claims have been amended for clarity and not for the purpose of distinguishing over Gura.

Similar to amended Claim 1, amended independent Claim 30 is directed to a gaming device having a bonus game including an award distributor, a plurality of selection sets with a plurality of selections in each selection set, a plurality of selection awards associated with the selections in said selection sets, a selector and a processor. The award distributor has a plurality of award symbols, at least one selection group activator symbol, and a symbol indicator. The processor causes the symbol indicator to indicate symbols of the award distributor, provides the player an award associated with each indicated award symbol, co-acts with the selector to enable the player to pick at least one of the selections from the plurality of selections in one of the selection groups

when the selection group activator symbol is indicated, and provides the selection award associated with each picked selection to the player. Similar to amended Claim 1, the gaming device of amended Claim 30 provides an award for each indicated symbol on the award distributor while Gura does not provide an award for each indicated symbol outcome. Additionally, unlike in Gura, the gaming device in amended independent Claim 30 provides the player a selection award for each picked selection. Additionally, amended Claim 30 includes a plurality of selection sets with a plurality of selection in each selection set, and which enables the player to pick at least one of the selections, which has not been previously picked by the player after a previous indication of the selection group activator, from the plurality of selections in one of the selection sets. For at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that amended Claim 30 is patentably distinguished over Gura and in condition for allowance.


Claims 31, 35 to 37 and 40 to 42, certain of which have been amended for clarity, depend directly or indirectly from amended Claim 30 and are also allowable for the reasons given with respect to amended Claim 30, and because of the additional features recited in these claims. Certain of these claims have been amended for clarity and not to distinguish over Gura.

Amended Claim 45 is directed to a gaming device including a plurality of selection sets having a plurality of selections, a plurality of selection awards associated with the selections in said sets, a selector, an award distributor and a processor. The award distributor has a plurality of award symbols, a selection group activator symbol associated with each selection set, and a symbol indicator. The selector enables a player to pick the selections in the selection sets. The processor causes the symbol indicator to indicate symbols of the award distributor, provides the player an award associated with each indicated award symbol, co-acts with the selector to enable the player to pick at least one of the selections from the selection set associated with the indicated selection group activator symbol, provides the selection award associated with each picked selection to the player and reduces after each time the player picks one of the selections in said selection set at least one available selection in the selection set which may be subsequently picked by the player after a selection group activator symbol is subsequently indicated. As described above with respect amended Claim 1,



the gaming device of amended Claim 45 provides an award for each indicated symbol on the award distributor and Gura does not provide an award for each indicated symbol outcome on the reels. Additionally, unlike in Gura, the gaming device described in Claim 45 provides the player a selection award for each picked selection. Additionally, unlike Gura, the gaming device of amended Claim 45 reduces after each time the player picks one of the selections in said selection set at least one available selection in the selection set which may be subsequently picked by the player after a selection group activator symbol is subsequently indicated. For these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that amended Claim 45 and its dependent Claim 46 are patentably distinguished over Gura and in condition for allowance.

Amended independent Claim 47 is directed to a gaming device including a first selection set, a second selection set, a plurality of selection awards associated with the first and second selection sets and a processor for causing the symbol indicator to indicate symbols of the award distributor, for providing the player an award associated with each indicated award symbol, for co-acting with the selector to enable the player to pick one of the selections from the first or second selection sets when the selection group activator symbols is indicated, for providing the selection award associated with each picked selection to the player, for eliminating the selection picked from the available selections in the first or second selection set which may be subsequently picked by the player after a selection group activator symbol is subsequently indicated. The first selection set includes selections with larger value awards than the second selection set. As described above with respect to amended Claim 1, the gaming device of amended Claim 47 provides an award for each indicated symbol on the award distributor and Gura does not provide an award for each indicated symbol outcome. Additionally, unlike in Gura, the gaming device of amended Claim 47 provides the player a selection award for each picked selection. Additionally, unlike Gura, the gaming device of amended Claim 47 eliminates the selection picked from the available selections in the first or second selection set which may be subsequently picked by the player after a selection group activator symbol is subsequently indicated. Moreover, Gura does not include multiple selection sets and a plurality of selection awards associated with the multiple selection sets. For at least these reasons, it is respectfully




submitted that amended independent Claim 47 is patentably distinguished over Gura and in condition for allowance.

Amended Claim 58 is directed to a method for operating a gaming device, including the steps of: (a) activating an award distributor including award symbols and at least one selection group activator symbol; (b) providing an award to the player if an award symbol is indicated by the award distributor; (c) displaying a selection set having a plurality of selections if a selection group activator symbol is indicated by the award distributor; (d) enabling a player to pick one of the selections from said selection set; (e) revealing a selection award associated with the picked selection; (f) providing the revealed provided selection award to the player; (g) decreasing the number of available selections in the selection set which may be subsequently picked by the player after a selection group activator is subsequently indicated; and (h) repeating steps (a) through (f) at least once. As described above with respect to amended Claim 1, Gura does not disclose a method of operating a gaming device which provides the player a selection award for each picked selection. Additionally, Gura does not decrease the plurality of available selections in the selection set which may be subsequently picked by the player after a selection group activator is subsequently indicated. For at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that amended independent Claim 58 is patentably distinguished over Gura and in condition for allowance.

Dependent Claims 19 and 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Gura. Applicant respectfully disagrees with and traverses this rejection because it would not have been obvious to modify Gura to provide the player the selection award associated with each picked selection as recited in Claims 19 and 23.

More specifically, dependent Claim 19 is directed to the gaming device of Claim 1, wherein the symbol indicator includes an illumination device which indicates an award symbol or selection group activator symbol of the distributor. The Office Action took official notice that it is well known in the art to illuminate symbols in slot gaming machines and thus, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to include this feature in Gura. Even in view of this notice, Gura still fails to disclose, teach or suggest providing the player an award for each





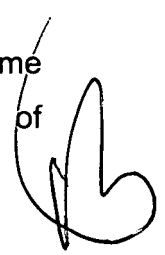
selected element. Rather, Gura describes a gaming device that provides a bonus award to the player based on the number of selectable elements selected prior to selecting the designated element, thus Gura teaches away from providing a bonus award for each player picked selection. On the other hand, Claim 19 provides the player a selection award for each player picked selection. Accordingly, for the reason that Gura fails to disclose, teach or suggest providing the player an award for each picked selectable element as well as the reasons described above in regard to amended Claim 1, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 19 is patentably distinguished over Gura and in condition for allowance.

Dependent Claim 23 is directed to the gaming device of Claim 1 (through dependent Claim 22), wherein the selection set includes a predetermined number of available selections and the processor decreases the number of subsequently available selections by a randomly determined number after each pick of a selection by a player. The Office Action states that it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to include this feature in Gura in order to give the casino/gaming authority more control over the game outcome. However, as described above, unlike Gura, Claim 23 provides the player an award for each picked selectable element and thus for all the reasons given with respect to amended Claim 1, Claim 23 is also patentably distinguished over Gura and in condition for allowance.

Claims 3, 20, 32, 39, 49 and 53 to 57 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Gura in view of Adams or Mayeroff. Applicant respectfully disagrees with and traverses this rejection.

Adams relates to a gaming device with an additional payout indicator such as a rotatable wheel with a plurality of selections. In Adams, when the reels of the primary game stop on one of a predetermined plurality of winning indicia sets, a secondary payout indicator in the form of a rotatable bonus wheel is caused to spin. The wheel gradually reduces speed and when the wheel stops, a pointer indicates the payout to be awarded to the player (col. 1, line 58 to col. 2, line 26). Each selection on the rotatable wheel indicates an increased winning value for the player (col 5, lines 38 to 43).

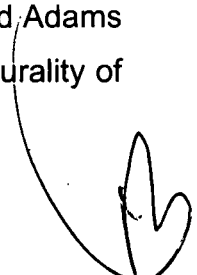
Mayeroff generally discloses to a slot machine having a multi-reel main game and a rotating wheel bonus game. Whenever the player achieves a combination of



symbols on the main game, the player is awarded with a bonus game. The number of spins provided to the player to spin the bonus wheel is based on the number of paylines that the player played on the main game or the number of credits wagered on each payline. Alternatively, the number of spins of the rotating wheel bonus game awarded to the player is determined by the symbol combination achieved by the player in the main game. Furthermore, all spins of the rotating wheel bonus game are winning spins (col. 4, lines 25-40).

Claim 3 depends from Claim 2 which depends from amended Claim 1 and includes the processor randomly detecting one of the selection sets when the selection group activator symbol is indicated. The Office Action states that it would have been obvious to employ a bonus wheel that randomly selects one of a plurality of selection sets, as disclosed by Adams, in the game of Gura. However, the Office Action provides absolutely no support for this conclusion. The Office Action does not explain any motivation, teaching or suggestion for this combination. Without such support, the Office Action is relying on improper hindsight. Moreover, even if combined, the gaming devices resulting from the combination of Gura and Adams or Gura and Mayeroff would still fail to teach, disclose or suggest the combination of elements of Claim 3 for the reasons stated above regarding amended Claim 1 and for the additional elements of Claim 3. For at least this reason, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 3 is patentably distinguished over the combination of Gura and Adams and the combination of Gura and Mayeroff and is in condition for allowance.

Claim 20 is directed to the gaming device of amended independent Claim 1, wherein the award distributor includes an award wheel wherein the award symbols and the selection group activator symbol are on the award symbol. The Office Action takes official notice that it well known in the art to employ a bonus wheel with a plurality of awards. The Office Action further states that it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to employ the bonus wheel with multiple sections, as disclosed in Adams or Mayeroff, in the game of Gura. Again, the Office Action provides no support or motivation for the combination which is apparently based on improper hindsight. However, even if the gaming devices resulting from the combination of Gura and Adams or the combination of Gura and Mayeroff incorporates a bonus wheel with a plurality of

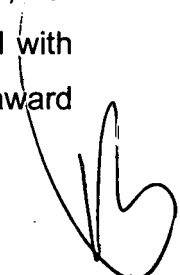


different start-bonus outcome on the award distributor, such gaming devices would still fail to teach, disclose or suggest the combination of elements set forth above of in amended Claim 1. Accordingly, for at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 20 is patentably distinguished over the combination of Gura and Adams and the combination of Gura and Mayeroff and in condition for allowance.

Claim 32 is directed to the gaming device of amended Claim 30, wherein the processor randomly selects one of the selection sets for the player to pick from when the selection group activator symbol is indicated. As described above with respect to Claim 3 and amended Claim 3, the gaming devices resulting from the combination of Gura and Adams or the combination of Gura and Mayeroff would still fail to teach, disclose or suggest the combination of elements of Claim 32. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 32 is patentably distinguished over the combination of Gura and Adams or the combination of Gura and Mayeroff and in condition for allowance.

Claim 39 is directed to the gaming device of amended independent Claim 30, wherein the award distributor includes an award wheel wherein the award symbols and the selection group activator symbol are on the award symbol. For the reasons given above with respect to Claim 20 and amended Claim 30, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 39 is patentably distinguished over the combination of Gura and Adams and the combination of Gura and Mayeroff and in condition for allowance.

Amended Claim 49 is directed a gaming device having a bonus game including a wheel having a plurality of sections, a plurality of award symbols on a plurality of the sections of said wheel, a plurality of awards associated with the award symbols, a selection group activator symbol on one of the sections of said wheel, at least one selection set associated with the selection group activator symbol, a plurality of selections included in each selection set, a plurality of selection awards associated with the selections, a section indicator and a processor for causing one of the award wheel and the section indicator to repeatedly move to indicate sections on the wheel, for providing the player an award associated with each indicated award symbol, for enabling the player to pick one of the selections from the selection set associated with the indicated selection group activator symbol and for providing the selection award



associated with each picked selection to the player and reducing available selections in the selection set which may be subsequently picked by the player after the selection group activator symbol is subsequently indicated. As described above, in Gura, the player is provided a bonus award based on the number of selectable elements selected prior to selecting the designated selection element. The fewer prior selected elements, the greater the provided bonus award. Unless the player selects the designated selection element with their first selection, the gaming device will not provide the player a bonus award for their first selection. Thus, the player may select a number of selectable elements before a bonus award, if any, is provided to the player. On the other hand, in the gaming device of amended Claim 49, each selection in the selection set is associated with a selection award and the player is provided a selection award for each picked selection. Additionally, Gura does not reduce the available selections in the selection set which may be subsequently picked by the player after the selection group activator is subsequently indicated. Accordingly, for at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 49 and its dependent Claims 50 to 53 are patentably distinguished over the combination of Gura and Adams and the combination of Gura and Mayeroff and in condition for allowance.

Similar to amended Claim 49, amended Claim 54 is directed to a gaming device having a bonus game including a wheel having a plurality of sections, a plurality of award symbols on a plurality of the sections of said wheel, a plurality of awards associated with the award symbols, at least one selection group activator symbol on at least one of the sections of the wheel, at least two selection sets, a plurality of selections included in each of the selection sets, a plurality of selection awards associated with the selections, a section indicator and a processor for causing one of the award wheel and the section indicator to repeatedly move to indicate sections on the wheel, for providing the player an award associated with each indicated award symbol, for enabling the player to pick one of the selections, which has not been previously picked by the player after a previous indication of the selection group activator, from one of the selection sets associated with the indicated selection group activator symbol, and for providing the selection award associated with each picked selection to the player. Unlike amended independent Claim 54, the gaming devices



resulting from the combination of Gura and Adams or the combination of Gura and Mayeroff would still fail to teach, disclose or suggest this combination of elements. Accordingly, for at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 54 and it's dependent Claim 55 are patentably distinguished over the combination of Gura and Adams and the combination of Gura and Mayeroff and in condition for allowance.

Amended Claim 56 is directed to a gaming device having a bonus game including a wheel, a plurality of award symbols associated with said wheel, and an award associated with each award symbol, a sub-game activator symbol associated with the wheel, a symbol indicator, a plurality of sub-games, each sub-game including at least one sub-game award and a processor for causing the symbol indicator to indicate one of the symbols on the wheel a plurality of times, for providing a player an award associated with each indicated award symbol, for enabling the player to play one of the sub-games when the sub-game activator symbol is indicated, and for providing the player a sub-game award obtained by the player in the sub-game. Gura, Adams and Mayeroff fail to teach, disclose or suggest a gaming device having the combination of elements that include a plurality of sub-games triggered upon a sub-game activator symbol associated with the wheel, wherein each sub-game includes at least one sub-game award. Accordingly, for the this reason alone, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 56 and it's dependent Claim 57 are patentably distinguished over the combination of Gura and Adams and the combination of Gura and Mayeroff and in condition for allowance.


Claims 4 to 7, 10 to 16, 18, 26, 27, 33, 34, 38, 43, 44, 48 and 50 to 52 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Gura in view of Thomas. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection because, even if combined, the gaming device resulting from the combination of Gura and Thomas fails to teach, disclose or suggest a gaming device with an award distributor that includes a terminator in combination with the other elements of these claims.

Thomas relates to a bonus game for a gaming machine. The bonus game is activated by a player obtaining one of a plurality of start-bonus symbol combinations on a plurality of reels. The bonus game provides a plurality of masked selection elements. Each selection element is associated with a particular bonus game outcome. The

bonus game outcomes consist of various numerical outcomes (such as, coin/credit values) and various non-numerical outcomes (such as, "end-bonus" outcomes). The various associated outcomes may be determined by the number of coins or credits played in the basic game. As play begins, the player selects, one at a time, an element from the plurality of masked selection elements. The bonus game outcome associated with the selected element is revealed. If the revealed bonus outcome is associated with an "end-bonus" outcome or terminator, the bonus game is terminated. If the revealed bonus outcome is associated with a numerical outcome, the player is provided the associated numerical value and the player may select another element. This process continues with the player selecting elements, one at a time, until selecting an element associated with an "end-bonus" outcome, which terminates the bonus game (paragraph 34, line 34 to paragraph 38, line 30).

Claims 4 to 7, 10 to 16 and 18, certain of which have been amended for clarity, depend directly or indirectly from amended Claim 1 and relate to probabilities associated with either each selection set (Claims 4 to 7), each symbol (Claims 10 to 16) or a plurality of potential total awards (Claim 18). While Thomas discloses probabilities corresponding to the number of numerical outcomes which may be obtained before a non-numerical outcome is obtained (Fig. 11), Thomas does not teach, suggest or disclose the combination of other elements of amended Claim 1. Accordingly, unlike Claims 4 to 7, 10 to 16 and 18, the gaming device combining the teachings of Gura and Thomas, would not provide the invention of these claims. For these reason, it is respectfully submitted that rejected Claims 4 to 7, 10 to 16 and 18 are patentably distinguished over the combination of Gura and Thomas and in condition for allowance.

Claim 26 is directed to the gaming device of amended Claim 1, wherein the award distributor includes at least one terminal symbol and the processor ends the activations of the award distributor if the terminal symbol is indicated by the symbol indicator. Unlike the gaming device resulting from the combination of Gura and Thomas, the gaming device of Claim 26 includes an award distributor with at least one terminator symbol. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 26 is patentably distinguished over the combination of Gura and Thomas and is in condition for allowance.



Claim 27 is directed to the gaming device of amended Claim 1, wherein a terminator is associated with one selection in the selection set and the processor ends the activations of the award distributor if the player picks the selection having the associated terminator. Unlike the gaming device resulting from the combination of Gura and Thomas, the gaming device of Claim 27 provides the player an award for each award symbol indicated on an award distributor. Accordingly, for the reasons given above with respect to traversing the rejection of Claim 1, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 27 is patentably distinguished over the combination of Gura and Thomas and is in condition for allowance.

Claims 33, 34 and 38, certain of which have been amended for clarity, depend directly or indirectly from Claim 30 and relate to a probability associated with either each selection set (Claims 33 and 34) or each symbol (Claim 38). The gaming device combining the teachings of Gura and Thomas does not provide for this combination. For this reason, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 33, 34 and 38 are patentably distinguished over the combination of Gura and Thomas and in condition for allowance.

Claim 43 is directed to the gaming device of Claim 30, wherein said award distributor includes at least one terminator symbol and if said terminator symbol is indicated by the symbol indicator, the activations of the award distributor end. Unlike the gaming device resulting from the combination of Gura and Thomas, the gaming device of Claim 43 includes an award distributor with at least one terminator symbol. For this reason and the reasons described above, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 43 is patentably distinguished over the combination of Gura and Thomas and in condition for allowance.

Claim 44 is directed to the gaming device of Claim 30, wherein a terminator is associated with one selection in the selection set and if the player picks the selection having the associated terminator, the activations of the award distributor end. For the reasons described above, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 44 is patentably distinguished over the combination of Gura and Thomas and in condition for allowance.

Claim 48 is directed to the gaming device of Claim 47, wherein probabilities of being activated are associated with said first and second selection sets, and the probability associated with said first selection set is higher than the probability

associated with said second selection set. For the reasons described above, it is respectfully submitted that rejected Claim 48 is patentably distinguished over the combination of Gura and Thomas and in condition for allowance.

Claims 50 to 52 depend directly or indirectly from Claim 49 and related to a probability associated with each section. For the reasons described above, it is respectfully submitted that rejected Claims 50 to 52 are patentably distinguished over the combination of Gura and Thomas and in condition for allowance.

New independent Claim 59 is directed to a gaming device including a primary game operable upon a wager, a secondary game including an award distributor having a plurality of award symbols, at least one selection group activator symbol, and a symbol indicator, at least one selection set in the secondary game, the selection set having a plurality of selections, a plurality of selection awards associated with the selections in the selection set, a selector for enabling a player to pick the selections in the selection set and a processor for triggering the secondary game upon an occurrence of an event in the primary game, for causing the symbol indicator to indicate symbols of the award distributor, for providing the player an award associated with each indicated award symbol, for co-acting with the selector to enable the player to pick at least one of the selections from the plurality of selections when the selection group activator symbol is indicated, for providing the selection award associated with each picked selection to the player and for reducing the plurality of available selections in the selection set which may be subsequently picked by the player when the selection group activator symbol is indicated. It is respectfully submitted that new independent Claim 59 is in condition for allowance.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the specification and claims by the current response. The attached page is captioned "**Version with Markings to Show Changes Made.**"

An earnest endeavor has been made to place this application in condition for formal allowance and in the absence of more pertinent art such action is courteously solicited. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this Response, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner contact the Applicant's attorney, Adam Masia, at (312) 807-4284 to discuss this Response.



Respectfully submitted,

BELL, BOYD & LLOYD LLC

BY



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**VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE**

**In the Specification:**

Paragraph 0013 has been rewritten as follows:

As indicated above, in one embodiment, the player has a predetermined number of activations of the award distributor. Alternatively, the processor can randomly determine the number of spins. In a further alternative embodiment, the gaming device enables the player to obtain a number of ~~or~~ additional spins at the beginning of the bonus game. The player picks from a plurality of masked choices to obtain the number of spins or additional spins associated with the player's choice.

Paragraph 0035 has been rewritten as follows:

Gaming device 10 also includes one or more display devices. The embodiment shown in Fig. 1A includes a central display device 30 and an award distributor in the form of a mechanical award wheel 100 that physically spins in front of a player. The award wheel is divided into a plurality of sections 102 where a section is indicated by a section indicator 110. The alternative embodiment shown in Fig. 1B includes a central display device 30 as well as an upper display device 32. The upper display device 32 displays the award distributor in the ~~from~~ form of an award wheel 100 of the present invention in a video format.

Paragraph 0045 has been rewritten as follows:

The selection group activator symbol 108 enables a player to play a sub-game or extension game of the primary award wheel bonus game of the present invention. The selection group activator symbol 108 in Fig. 3 is designated by the word "GOLD," however, the selection group activator symbol may be designated by any word, symbol, image or sound desired by the game implementor. When a selection group activator symbol 108 is indicated by section indicator 110, the gaming device prompts the player to pick a selection from a selection set 112. The gaming device may prompt the player by displaying a phrase such as "Pick a Selection," or illuminate the selection set 112. It should be appreciated that any type of prompt or prompting method may be employed

to prompt the player to pick a selection from the selection set 112. The player picks a selection from a selection set using a selector. In one embodiment, the display device includes a touch screen, which functions as a selector for enabling the player to pick the selections. In an alternative embodiment, the selector is one or more mechanical or electromechanical buttons or indicators which communicate with the processor and enable the player to pick the selections.

Paragraph 0047 has been rewritten as follows:

The selections 114 are associated with selection awards 116 wherein the awards are initially masked or hidden to a player. When a player picks a selection 114, the selection award 116 associated with that selection is revealed to the player. The revealed selection awards remain revealed to the player until the bonus game ends. Preferably, the selection awards are credits, however, it should be appreciated that the selection awards may be free spins, free games, multipliers, zero awards, negative awards or any other type of award desired by the game implementor. The selection set 112 includes a fixed number of selections 114. The selection awards associated with the selections preferably include a range of awards that progressively increase in value from at least one relatively low award value to at least one relatively large award value as shown in the selection set 112 in Fig. 3. The selection set 112, however, may include any fixed number of selections and award values as desired by the game implementor. The selection awards 116 are preferably predetermined by the processor 38 and associated with the selections at the beginning of the bonus game. Alternatively, the selections 114 are associated by the processor with selection awards 116 as the player picks each selection.

Paragraph 0048 has been rewritten as follows:

The gaming device preferably includes an activation or spin display 118 and a total award display 120. The activation or spin display 118 indicates the number of activations or spins of the award distributor and (in this embodiment, the award wheel) that are remaining in the bonus game. The number of spins indicated in spin display


118 decreases by one after each spin by a player. Also, the spin display will reflect any additional spins earned by the player during the bonus game. The total award display 120 indicates the total value of the awards and bonus awards that the player has accumulated at each point during the bonus game. When the player runs out of spins and the bonus game ends, the total award identified in the total award display 120 is transferred to the player's credit display in a conventional manner.

Paragraph 0049 has been rewritten as follows:

Referring now to Fig. 4, the operation of the bonus game of the present invention is illustrated by a flow diagram. A player initially plays a base game of the gaming device. In a traditional slot machine gaming device, the player spins a plurality of reels including different symbols usually associated with the theme of the particular gaming device. If the player obtains a bonus triggering symbol or symbol combination, the player initiates the bonus game of the gaming device as indicated by block 200.

Paragraph 0053 has been rewritten as follows:

If the gaming device determines that a selection group activator symbol is indicated by the section indicator in decision diamond 204, ~~the gaming device prompts the player to pick a selection from a selection set as indicated by block 206. The player preferably picks one selection from the selection set as indicated by block 208.~~ the gaming device then determines if there are any selections remaining in the selection set as indicated by decision diamond ~~240~~ 206. Preferably, if there are no selections remaining in the selection set, the player does not receive an award and is prompted to spin the award wheel again as indicated by block 201 without decrementing the spin meter or counter 118. If there is at least one selection remaining in the selection set, the gaming device prompts the player to pick a selection from a selection set as indicated by block 208. The player preferably picks one selection from the selection set as indicated by block 210. ~~If the player picked a remaining selection in the selection set,~~ The gaming device reveals the selection award associated with that selection as indicated by block 212. The selection award is added to the player's total award in the bonus game as indicated by block 214.



Paragraph 0056 has been rewritten as follows:

Referring now to Figs. 5A through 5F, an example of one embodiment of the present invention is illustrated where the player spins the award wheel 100 five times in the bonus game. As shown in Fig. 5A, the award wheel 100 has several sections 102, one including a selection group activator symbol 108 designated by the word "Gold" and a plurality of selections including associated with award values 104. A selection set 112 having a plurality of masked selections 114 is associated with the selection group activator symbol 108. If a selection group activator symbol 108 is indicated by the section indicator 110, the gaming device will prompt the player to pick one selection from the selection set 112. The picked selection 114 reveals a selection award that will remain viewable by the player until the bonus game ends. The picked selection and associated selection award are no longer available to be selected in the selection set. Therefore, the player will only pick from the remaining available selections in the selection set when a selection group activator symbol is indicated in subsequent spins or activations. In this example, the spin display 118 indicates that the player has five spins in the bonus game. Also, the player does not begin the game with any awards as indicated by the total award display 120.

Paragraph 0057 has been rewritten as follows:

In Fig. 5B, the player begins the game by spinning the award wheel 100. The award wheel 100 spins in a clockwise direction as shown by arrow 106. After the award wheel 100 stops spinning, the section indicator 110 indicates the section 102 obtained by the player. The indicated section ~~includes~~ is associated with an award value of thirty-five ~~after the first spin~~. Therefore, after the first spin, the award value, of thirty-five, is added to the total bonus award ~~for the game~~ as displayed in the award display 120. Since this spin was the player's first spin in the bonus game, the player's total award equals the value of the award obtained after the first spin, which is thirty-five. Any awards that the player obtains in subsequent spins ~~are~~ will be added to this total award shown in award display 120.

Paragraph 0058 has been rewritten as follows:

Since the player still has spins remaining in the bonus game, the gaming device prompts and enables the player to spin the award wheel 100 again. In Fig. 5C, the player spins the award wheel for the second time in the bonus game. After this spin, the indicator 110 indicates a section 102 that includes a selection group activator symbol 108, which is designated with the word "GOLD." The selection group activator symbol 108 is linked or associated with selection set 112, which includes a plurality of masked selections 114. In this example, the selection set 112 is titled "Gold Records" and the plurality of selections 114 represent records having various album or song titles. It should be appreciated that any theme or subject may be used for the selection group activator symbol, selection set and selections. Because the section indicator 110 indicates a selection group activator symbol, the gaming device prompts the player to pick one selection 114 from the selection set 112. The player picks selection 122 from the selection set, which reveals an associated selection award of twenty-five. The selection award value, of twenty-five, is added to the total award of thirty-five to achieve the new total award of sixty as indicated in total award display 120. The bonus award associated with picked selection 122 remains viewable by the player for the remainder of the bonus game. However, selection 122 is eliminated from the selection set 112 so that the player may only pick from the remaining available masked selections 114, excluding revealed selection 122, if the player obtains another selection group activator symbol during this bonus game. The player has three spins remaining in the bonus game as indicated by the spin display 118.

Paragraph 0062 has been rewritten as follows:

Referring now to Figs. 6A through 6E, another embodiment of the present invention is illustrated where the bonus game includes a plurality of selection group activator symbols and selection sets. Referring to Fig. 6A, the award wheel 100 includes two selection group activator symbols 126 and 128, respectively, wherein one selection group activator symbol 126 is designated with the word "GOLD" and the other 128 is designated with the word "PLATINUM." Selection group activator symbol 126 links the player to the "GOLD RECORDS" selection set 112 and selection group

activator symbol 128 links the player to the "PLATINUM RECORDS" selection set 130. Selection set 112 includes five selections 114, which are associated with masked selection awards 116 (shown in phantom). Selection set 130 includes five selections 132, which are associated with masked selection awards 134 (shown in phantom). In this example, the selection awards associated with selection set 114 have relatively small award values (i.e., 10, 40, 50, 75 and 200) and the selection awards associated with selection set 130 have relatively large award values (i.e., 100, 200, 300, 400 and 1000). Therefore, in this example, the player desires to pick selections in selection set 130 because this selection set has selection awards with larger values. The player begins the bonus game with four spins as indicated by spin display 118, and a total award of zero as indicated by total award display 120.

**In the Claims:**

Claim 1 has been amended as follows:

1. (Amended) A gaming device comprising:

an award distributor having a plurality of award symbols, at least one selection group activator symbol, and a symbol indicator;

at least one selection set having a plurality of selections;

a plurality of selection awards associated with said selections in said selection set;

a selector for enabling a player to pick said selections in said selection set; and

a processor for causing said symbol indicator to indicate symbols of the award distributor, for providing the player ~~any~~ an award associated with each indicated award symbol, for co-acting with the selector to enable the player to pick at least one of the selections from said plurality of selections when said selection group activator symbol is indicated, for providing the selection award associated with each picked selection to the player and for reducing the ~~number~~ plurality of available selections in said selection set which may be subsequently picked by the player when the selection group activator symbol is indicated subsequently indicated by the symbol indicator of the award distributor.

Claim 4 has been amended as follows:

4. (Amended) The gaming device of Claim 2 3, which includes a probability associated with each selection set ~~that such selection set will be activated when said selection group activator symbol is indicated~~.

Claim 10 has been amended as follows:

10. (Amended) The gaming device of Claim 1, which includes a probability of being indicated associated with each symbol, wherein the processor determines the symbol indicated based on said each probabilities probability.



Claim 30 has been amended as follows:

30. (Amended) A gaming device having a bonus game comprising:

an award distributor having a plurality of award symbols, at least one selection group activator symbol, and a symbol indicator;

a plurality of selection sets and with a plurality of selections in each selection set;

a plurality of selection awards associated with said selections in said selection sets;

a selector for enabling a player to pick said selections in said selection sets; and

a processor for causing said symbol indicator to indicate symbols of the award distributor, for providing the player **any** award associated with each indicated award symbol, for co-acting with the selector to enable the player to pick at least one of the selections, which has not been previously picked by the player after a previous indication of the selection group activator, from said plurality of selections in one of said selection groups when said selection group activator symbol is indicated, and for providing the selection award associated with each picked selection to the player.

Claim 31 has been amended as follows:

31. (Amended) The gaming device of Claim 30, wherein when one of the selections in one of the selection sets is selected, the processor reduces the ~~number~~ plurality of available selections in said selection set which may be subsequently picked by the player.

Claim 33 has been amended as follows:

33. (Amended) The gaming device of Claim 30, ~~which includes a probability associated with~~ wherein each selection set is associated with a probability that such selection set will be activated when said selection group activator symbol is indicated.

Claim 45 has been amended as follows:

45. (Amended) A gaming device comprising:

a plurality of selection sets having a plurality of selections;

a plurality of selection awards associated with said selections in said sets;

a selector for enabling a player to pick said selections in said selection sets;

an award distributor having a plurality of award symbols, a selection group activator symbol associated with each selection set, and a symbol indicator; and

a processor for causing said symbol indicator to indicate symbols of the award distributor, for providing the player **any** award associated with each indicated award symbol, for co-acting with the selector to enable the player to pick at least one of the selections from the selection set associated with the indicated selection group activator symbol, for providing the selection award associated with each picked selection to the player and for reducing after each time the player picks one of the selections in said selection set at least one available selection in said selection set which may be subsequently picked by the player after each time the player picks one of the selections in said selection set.

Claim 47 has been amended as follows:

47. (Amended) A gaming device comprising:

a first selection set;

a second selection set;

a plurality of selection awards associated with said first and second selection sets, wherein said first selection set includes selections with larger value awards than said second selection set;

a selector for enabling a player to pick said selections in said selection sets;

an award distributor having a plurality of award symbols, a selection group activator symbol, and a symbol indicator; and

a processor for causing said symbol indicator to indicate symbols of the award distributor, for providing the player **any** award associated with each indicated award symbol, for co-acting with the selector to enable the player to pick one of the selections from said first or second selection sets when said selection group activator symbols is indicated, for providing the selection award associated with each picked selection to the player, for eliminating the selection picked from the available selections in said first or second selection set which may be subsequently picked by the player after a selection group activator symbol is subsequently indicated.

Claim 49 has been amended as follows:

49. (Amended) A gaming device having a bonus game comprising:

a wheel having a plurality of sections;

a plurality of award symbols on a plurality of said sections of said wheel;

a plurality of awards associated with said award symbols;

a selection group activator symbol on one of said sections of said wheel;

at least one selection set associated with said selection group activator symbol;

a plurality of selections included in each ~~of said~~ selection sets;

a plurality of selection awards associated with said selections;

a section indicator; and

a processor for causing one of said award wheel and said section indicator to repeatedly move to indicate sections on the wheel, for providing the player **any** award associated with each indicated award symbol, for enabling the player to pick one of the selections from the selection set associated with the indicated selection group activator symbol and for providing the selection award associated with each picked selection to the player and reducing available selections in said selection set which may be subsequently picked by the player after the selection group activator symbol is subsequently indicated.

Claim 53 has been amended as follows:

53. (Amended) The gaming device of Claim 49, which includes a plurality if of activations of said award wheel.

Claim 54 has been amended as follows:

54. (Amended) A gaming device having a bonus game comprising:
- a wheel having a plurality of sections;
  - a plurality of award symbols on a plurality of said sections of said wheel;
  - a plurality of awards associated with said award symbols;
  - at least one selection group activator symbol on at least one of said sections of said wheel;
  - at least two selection sets;
  - a plurality of selections included in each of said selection sets;
  - a plurality of selection awards associated with said selections;
  - a section indicator; and
  - a processor for causing one of said award wheel and said section indicator to repeatedly move to indicate sections on the wheel, for providing the player **any** award associated with each indicated award symbol, for enabling the player to pick one of the selections, which has not been previously picked by the player after a previous indication of the selection group activator, from one of the selection sets associated with the indicated selection group activator symbol, and for providing the selection award associated with each picked selection to the player.

Claim 56 has been amended as follows:

56. (Amended) A gaming device having a bonus game comprising:

a wheel;

a plurality of award symbols associated with said wheel, and an award associated with each award symbol;

a sub-game activator symbol associated with said wheel;

a symbol indicator;

a plurality of sub-games, each sub-game including at least one sub-game award;

and

a processor for causing the symbol indicator to indicate one of the symbols on the wheel a plurality of times, for ~~producing~~ providing a player ~~any~~ awards associated with ~~the~~ each indicated award symbols, for enabling the player to play one of the sub-games when said sub-game activator symbol is indicated, and for providing the player ~~any~~ sub-game award obtained by the player in the sub-game.

Claim 58 has been amended as follows:

58. A method for operating a gaming device, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) activating an award distributor including award symbols and at least one selection group activator symbol;

(b) providing an award to the player if an award symbol is indicated by the award distributor;

(c) displaying a selection set having a plurality of selections if a selection group activator symbol is indicated by the award distributor;

(d) enabling a player to pick one of said selections from said selection set;

(e) revealing a selection award associated with the picked selection;

(f) providing the revealed provided selection award to the player;

(f) (g) decreasing the number plurality of available selections in the selection set which may be subsequently picked by the player after a selection group activator is subsequently indicated; and

(g) (h) repeating steps (a) through (e) (f) at least once.

Appl. No. 09/682,369

New Claim 59 has been added.

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